

In my home State of Virginia, we have always felt a special connection to Lady Bird Johnson. She was the mother of Lynda Bird Robb, who was the Commonwealth's First Lady from 1982 to 1986, and the mother-in-law of Chuck Robb who was Governor at that time and later a distinguished Member of this body.

During her frequent trips to our State, Virginians always embraced Lady Bird Johnson for her warmth, grace, and strength of character. These were the same values for which all Americans held her in such high esteem.

I want to extend to her family and many friends my deepest sympathies, as well as my appreciation for her extraordinary life. America is a much better Nation because of the life and service of Lady Bird Johnson.

INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT ON AL-QAIDA

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, the new intelligence assessment is a chilling reminder that the American people are less secure than we were on 9/11. According to press reports of the assessment, al-Qaida has reconstituted, rebuilt its training and command and control capabilities, and is better positioned to strike the West. Meanwhile, Osama bin Laden and his top deputy are still on the loose.

If America is again attacked, it will be in no small measure a consequence of the Bush administration's failure to destroy al-Qaida at its roots in Afghanistan and to adequately secure the homeland. The decision to authorize and fight a misguided war in Iraq also created a new cadre of experienced terrorists bent on the destruction of the United States and our allies. The recent attacks in Britain are likely only the beginning of an Iraqi "blowback," which may haunt us for years to come. Since we invaded Iraq, the number of Islamic extremist terrorist attacks—excluding those in Iraq and Afghanistan—has risen by 35 percent worldwide.

We cannot win a war against the terrorists if we are on the wrong battlefield. America must urgently begin re-deploying from Iraq and take the fight more effectively to the enemy's home by destroying al-Qaida's leadership along the Afghan-Pakistan border, eliminating their command and control networks, and disrupting their funding. To counter their ability to rebuild these capabilities, we must convince Pakistan to pursue an effective strategy, with our assistance, to deny the terrorists sanctuary in Pakistan's northwest territories. We must also finish the job and secure Afghanistan, where the Taliban is resurgent.

But it will take more than force to defeat this threat. It will take wisdom and patience to restore America's credibility in the Muslim world and re-

duce both passive and active support for extremists. We need to partner with the vast majority of Muslims in their struggle against those who would distort their religion, create oppressive theocracies, and kill innocents. We must demonstrate through action, not mere words, that America is not at war with Islam, and that we will stand with those Muslims who seek a better future.

Abu Ghraib served as a recruiting poster for violent Islamic extremists. Guantanamo has diminished America's standing in the Muslim world and with our closest allies. The needless violation of our civil liberties at home has damaged our moral authority abroad. All these actions have undercut our fight against terrorists. This is not America, this is not who we are. We must close Guantanamo, renounce torture, and respect the rule of law to be faithful to our own values, prosecute the war on terrorism more effectively, and begin to engender renewed admiration for America in the Muslim world. American values and liberties must be seen as a source of our strength, not as a liability, in the fight against terrorism.

Finally, we must take many long-overdue steps to better secure our homeland. We need to lock down loose nuclear material around the world, upgrade port, transport and chemical plant security, allocate homeland security dollars according to risk, and give local law enforcement the resources and intelligence support to help prevent rather than simply respond to terrorist attacks.

The administration argues this intelligence assessment proves its case for doing more of the same. On the contrary, the American people cannot afford more of the same. This intelligence assessment reminds us once again of the consequences of the decision to authorize and fight the war in Iraq, and to direct our resources away from the wider war on terrorism that was yet to be won. It underscores the urgent need for a new, more effective counterterrorism strategy at home and abroad.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SPECIALIST DUSTIN WORKMAN

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I rise to express my sympathy over the loss of U.S. Army SPC Dustin Workman II of Greenwood, NE. Specialist Workman was killed on June 28 by an improvised explosive device in Baghdad. He was 19 years old.

Specialist Workman graduated from Ashland-Greenwood High School in 2005. Faculty at Ashland-Greenwood remember his talent for writing and his love of books, though not necessarily the ones assigned to him, his skill in mechanical working, and most importantly, his hard work and commitment

to finishing school. From the time he was a freshman at Ashland-Greenwood, Specialist Workman's teachers noticed a strong desire to serve in the Army.

Specialist Workman enlisted with the Army and served with B Company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, based at Fort Carson, CO. We are proud of Specialist Workman's service to our country, as well as the thousands of other brave Americans serving in Iraq.

Specialist Workman is survived by his parents Dustin and Valerie, younger brother Korey, and younger sister Krysta.

I ask my colleagues to join me and all Americans in honoring SPC Dustin Workman II.

GUATEMALA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, with the Congress's attention on Iraq and the Middle East, I want to take a moment to alert other Senators to an important issue in Guatemala, a country that rarely makes the news in Washington.

Many of us remember the decades of civil conflict that caused the deaths of an estimated 200,000 Guatemalans, many of them indigenous Mayan civilians. Since those dark days, most Guatemalans have tried to put that tragic period behind them and to build the institutions of democracy that can provide economic development, stability and justice.

While the Guatemalan Army has shrunk to half its size, the peace accords that ended the fighting have yet to be fully realized. Most troubling is the rampant violent crime, organized crime and corruption, much of it perpetrated by illegal armed groups, some of which are comprised of former members of the security forces and their supporters.

During the tenure of President Berger, the Guatemalan Government, with the assistance of the United Nations, has sought to establish a commission to investigate and prosecute these clandestine groups. The first attempt was rejected by Guatemala's Constitutional Court, but recently the Court approved the establishment of an International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala, CICIG. The CICIG is widely regarded as an essential mechanism for combating the cancer of human rights violations and organized crime that are threatening to destroy the foundations of Guatemala's democracy.

It is important to note that the Constitutional Court confirmed that CICIG would work alongside the Attorney-General's office in investigating illegal groups. Far from weakening national sovereignty, CICIG will support Guatemala by helping to strengthen the capacity of the country's weak judicial system.

Not only could CICIG go a long way in fulfilling the government's commitment under the peace accords to combat illegal armed groups, it could also help to uncover the full extent of these groups and dismantle their underlying structure. Most importantly, it would be an unprecedented step in ending the impunity that has been the greatest impediment to establishing the rule of law in Guatemala.

At this point, the future of CICIG is in the hands of the Guatemalan Congress, and with new elections approaching time is running out. It would be a terrible waste of years of hard work by the Guatemalan Government and the United Nations if the CICIG is not approved. Whether for prospective foreign investors or the surviving families of victims of political violence, nothing is more important than knowing the truth and seeing that justice is finally possible.

On June 28, the Senate Appropriations Committee, like the House of Representatives last month, unanimously reported the fiscal year 2008 foreign aid appropriations bill. That legislation would authorize the resumption of assistance for the Guatemalan Air Force, Navy and Army Corps of Engineers, if they are respecting human rights and the Guatemalan Congress ratifies the CICIG agreement.

I urge the Guatemalan Congress to seize this historic opportunity. The alternative, which is almost unthinkable, of rejecting this essential step to uphold the rule of law, would send a chilling message that it is the forces of crime and violence who will determine Guatemala's future. That is not an outcome that Guatemala or its people can afford.

TRIBUTE TO BOB VAN HEUVELEN

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to my chief of staff upon his retirement from the U.S. Senate. Robert Van Heuvelen is recognized not only by me, but also by his colleagues and other Members, as a highly respected, effective, and engaging public servant.

Mr. Van Heuvelen has had a remarkable career in the Federal Government, spanning over 32 years. Bob first came to Capitol Hill in 1975 to work as a legislative assistant for the Honorable Quentin Burdick in the Senate. Following that, he served as assistant counsel for the Environment and Public Works Committee for the Honorable Edmund Muskie. He remained in Washington and went on to work as a Federal prosecutor at the U.S. Department of Justice, rising to the position of deputy and acting chief of the Department of Justice's environmental enforcement section, and eventually to director of the Office of Regulatory Enforcement at the Environmental Protection Agency.

For the past 10 years, I have been privileged to have Bob serve on my staff, first as policy director and then

as chief of staff. He brought with him extensive experience in Government and his lifelong dedication to our home State of North Dakota.

During his tenure in my office, some of his most notable accomplishments include coordinating disaster relief for the devastating 1997 flood of Grand Forks, spearheading the work of a tobacco task force to formulate a strong public health response to the tobacco settlements, fighting for a fair Medicare distribution formula and estate tax reform. He also made great strides in developing strong working relations with both his Democratic and Republican colleagues. Bob has helped organize monthly breakfasts, dinners, and policy meetings for chiefs of staff of both parties, fostering a sense of bipartisanship, an accomplishment which is truly praiseworthy.

Bob is a native of Bismarck, ND. He earned his bachelor's degree at Macalester College in Minnesota. Following that, he attended the University of Minnesota, where he received his master's degree in public policy, and George Washington University, where he received his juris doctor. Today, Bob and his wife of 30 years, Jane Sherburne, live in Bethesda, MD. They have three wonderful children—Ben, Elizabeth, and Will.

As Bob goes forward in his life and on to other endeavors, I hope that he proudly looks back at his time here on Capitol Hill and realizes the tremendous difference he has made for North Dakota, our Nation, and in the lives of so many people. I am honored to have had the pleasure to work with him and look forward to our ongoing friendship. We have had great fun doing the Nation's business, and I will miss him. I commend Bob for his many achievements and superior service and wish him the very best.

IN RECOGNITION OF VASILIKI CHRISTOPOULOS

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, today I wish to express Kathy's and my greatest admiration and thanks for a person who over the past 14 years has been the heart and soul of my Washington staff. Vasiliki Alexopoulos Christopoulos has served as my administrative assistant since February 2001 and before that as my legislative director, director of appropriations and as a legislative assistant. From her first days when she began working with us during our 1992 Senate campaign, Kathy and I knew Vas was an extraordinary person.

To describe Vas simply as AA does not do her justice—although that job is at the center of a well-run and effective Washington office and is critical to the success of a Senator. She, rather, has been the heartbeat of the office. Her caring, warm, and always positive personality calms the stormy times and has given all of us a shot of energy when we needed a lift. Vas understands that running an office is more than assigning tasks. Under her leadership, it

has been about building an exceptional team. She always makes sure that when there is a task to be done, it is not left to one person; rather, everyone jumps in with Vas leading the way.

Whether it is counseling interns through separation anxieties, interviewing people to join the office, or assisting Kathy, me, and our children in making sense out of this chaotic lifestyle, Vas has always organized, planned, and followed through in a manner that has led to a successful end in a positive way.

Walking with Vas to get a cup of coffee is like taking a field trip. This is no police officer, no maintenance staff, no congressional staff who does not know Vas and want to share a story. One quickly learns that everyone in Washington is Greek.

Vas could do about anything she wishes, including probably be mayor of Nashua, but she has chosen a different course. She is moving from the friendly confines of Washington and Nashua to the cold, barren land of Grand Rapids, MI. Michigan, where the summer occurs on July 4, will be the better for this. She will bring her sunny personality which will inevitably warm even the chill climate of Michigan.

As Vas and her terrific husband Jimmy embark on this new career path and challenge, seeking all things Greek, Kathy joins me in thanking her for all her years of dedication to the Gregg family, our office staff, and all the people of New Hampshire. We have all greatly benefited from her commitment and love. She has been and will remain a part of our family and although she will be a bit further away, we wish her only the best and say thank you.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING REYNOLDS, NORTH DAKOTA

• Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, today I recognize a community in North Dakota that will be celebrating its anniversary. On July 27–29, the residents of Reynolds will gather to celebrate their community's history and founding.

Reynolds is a vibrant community located in eastern North Dakota. Founded in 1880, years before North Dakota was granted statehood, Reynolds was named for Dr. Henry A. Reynolds, who served as a surgeon in the Civil War and had recently migrated to the area from Maine. Reynolds, like many other North Dakota communities, was originally incorporated with the arrival of the railroad.

Reynolds is now, and always has been, a very unique community. The city itself has two churches, two elevators, and is separated by two counties. The number two is very important to the residents of Reynolds, and celebrating its quasiquicentennial 2 years late is, as the community says, kind of a "Reynoldsism."